HARRIS COMICS

VAMPIRELLA®

QUEEN'S GAMBIT 2

MONTHLY 8

CONNER '98 PAIMIOTTI

THE STORY SO FAR...

Vampirella is certain of two things...Patrice Esposito is crucial to preventing the upcoming Vampire Apocalypse and the vampires will stop at nothing to get her. The only problem is Vampi can't figure out why. Even after Vampirella and the sisterhood rescue Patrice from certain death, they are no closer to understanding her importance.

Shi is certain of two things...she has sworn to find and protect Patrice, and somehow Vampirella is mixed up in Patrice's disappearance. Tracking Vampirella and Patrice to the Sisterhood safe house, Shi battles Vampirella to a stalemate, until they are interrupted by a horde of vampires who kidnap Patrice.

Together they are certain of just one thing...despite their differences, teaming up is the only way to save Patrice and prevent the destruction of humanity.

DON'T *PANIC!* WE'VE BEEN OUTNUMBERED *BEFORE!*

THE FUTURE OF THE HUMAN RACE *DEPENDS* ON WHAT WE DO HERE TODAY.

WE CAN STILL SAVE THE WORLD!

THROWING THE GAME? BORED ALREADY?

YOU ALWAYS GET PETULANT WHEN YOU'RE LOSING.

I AM *NOT* LOSING.

YOU HAVEN'T WON A GAME SINCE WE *STARTED* PLAYING.

PERHAPS WE SHOULD FLIP COINS. AT LEAST THERE'D BE AN ELEMENT OF *CHANCE* TO IT, FOR A *CHANGE*.

CHANCE AND CHANGE. YES, I CAN SEE WHERE YOU WOULD BE DRAWN TO THAT.

ARE YOU *SERIOUSLY* TRYING TO CLAIM ALL THOSE WORLDS KILLED BY YOUR LOSSES ARE PART OF SOME *MASTER PLAN?*

WHY NOT? THE *RARER* VICTORY HAS MORE MEANING.

AND THE UNEXPECTED LOSS THE BITTEREST *STING.* WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

YOUR MOVE.

A DEFROCKED *DEMI-GOD*, A *SHAPESHIFTER*, A REPRESSED *TWENTY-SOMETHING*, AND A RENEGADE *VAMPIRE* -- THAT'S *SOME* "HUMAN RACE."

THERE IS NO ONE ELSE. THIS WORLD IS *DEAD*.

YOU LYING *BITCH!*

PANTHA! NO! STAY WITH US! SHE *WANTS* TO BREAK US UP!

HANG *TOGETHER* OR HANG *SEPARATELY*, IS THAT THE STRATEGY? IT HARDLY MATTERS TO *ME*.

BUT PERHAPS YOU CAN ESCAPE AGAIN. PERHAPS EVEN SAVE ONE OF YOUR LITTLE *PLAYTHINGS*, FOR THE *MOMENT*.

BUT WHICH *ONE?*

VAMPI!

VAMPIRELLA! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. IT IS *YOU* THEY TRULY FEAR!

THIS WILL TAKE YOU BACK TO THE *SIXTIES!* YOU'LL HAVE THIRTY YEARS TO PREPARE THIS TIME! YOU CAN CHANGE WHAT HAPPENED!

YOU CAN STILL SAVE US...

I DON'T THINK SO.

30 YEARS? I'D HEARD HE WAS A *TIME TRAVELER.*

I CAN GO BACK TO INFLICT 30 *MORE* YEARS OF HORROR ON THIS RANCID LITTLE SMUDGE OF MUD. OOOH, I'M ALL *TINGLY.*

NO!

YOU CAN'T HAVE THE *TIMESPHERE!*

OH *THAT?* *SURE* I CAN. WITH *THIS* TRINKET, I CAN KILL THE *SAME* WORLD *TWICE.* HOW COULD I PASS *THAT* UP?

FACE IT, DARLING -- IF YOU *COULD* STOP ME, YOU'D HAVE *DONE* IT BY NOW.

VAMP!

HELP!

OW!

I GOT IT!

LET'S GO!

I... CAN'T... IT'S TOO LATE... I'LL HOLD HER OFF.

I'M *AFRAID*, VAMPI! I CAN'T DO THIS *WITHOUT* YOU!

YOU WON'T DO IT AT *ALL*.

GOD *DAMN* YOU!

WHY?!

WHY CAN'T *ANYONE* TELL ME WHY?!

THAT'S THE FUTURE YOU WANTED US TO SEE?

IT'S NOT AS IF TIME IS SET IN *STONE. TRY* TO WRAP YOUR MIND AROUND THAT CONCEPT.

AT *THIS* MOMENT THAT *IS* THE MOST PROBABLE OUTCOME, *YES.*

DON'T FIGHT GUYS! IT SOUNDED LIKE THE END OF THE *WORLD* IN HERE!

MOTHER SUPERIOR TOLD US TO *TRUST* THE WHITE BISHOP, VAMPI, REMEMBER?*

* VAMPIRELLA #6

AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE READING THE *BLACK TESTAMENT?*

I *WAS,* BUT...

THEN *DO IT!*

DIXIE'S NOT TO BE *PART* OF THIS, IS THAT *CLEAR?* SHE'S *NEVER* TO KNOW SHE BECOMES *MOTHER SUPERIOR!*

I DON'T *EVER* WANT HER LEARNING SHE WATCHED HERSELF *DIE!**

SHE *DOESN'T...* IN ANY FUTURE *CURRENTLY* AVAILABLE.

HOW COULD *THAT* HAVE BEEN THE FUTURE? WHERE WAS *I* IN IT? WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH FINDING *PATRICE ESPOSITO?*

* VAMPIRELLA #6

GOD, IT'S LIKE TRYING TO TRAIN A *ROCK.* PAY *ATTENTION.* ALL OF HUMANITY WAS *WIPED OUT.* YOU *OBVIOUSLY* DIDN'T MAKE THE *CUT.*

AND YOUR *PATRICE* IS IN THE HANDS OF THE *ARCHITECT* OF THE APOCALYPSE--

"THE *LEFT HAND* OF CHAOS- *THE BLACK BISHOP!"*

SHOW HER OUR *LOVE,* QUEEN.

KISS HER AGAIN FOR US.

TELL US WHERE THE *CHILD* IS, PATRICE. THAT IS THE *PRICE* OF YOUR SALVATION.

PUT NO HOPE IN VAMPIRELLA, THE WHITE BISHOP, OR ORDER'S OTHER PUPPETS.

YOU ARE *PAST* THE POINT OF RESCUE.

ENOUGH! WE DON'T WANT HER *DEAD.*

IT'S THE WILL OF *CHAOS!* I HEAR HIS *WHISPER* IN MY *EAR!*

AN *ORDER* FROM *CHAOS?* THAT'S VERY *AMUSING* - BUT DON'T MISTAKE YOUR OWN *BLOODTHIRST* FOR *VISION.*

ALL LIFE TENDS TOWARD CHAOS, PATRICE. HE *CREATES* US AND SETS US *LOOSE.*

THAT'S WHY WE CAN'T BE PREDICTED. THERE'S NO DEFENSE AGAINST US.

OH NO.

I WAS *WONDERING* WHEN YOU'D RECOGNIZE ME. I'VE BEEN SCHEMING FOR *DECADES,* PATRICE. ONLY THE *CHILD* CAN BRING THINGS TO *FRUITION.*

YOU'VE NO *RIGHT* TO KEEP HER FROM *ME.* SHE'S *MY* CHILD TOO.

LET ME TEAR THE ANSWER FROM HER!

IN TIME, *IF* NECESSARY. BE *PATIENT.*

THIS HAS BEEN PLANNED SINCE YOUR BIRTH. DIDN'T YOUR MOTHER EVER TELL YOU?

IT ISN'T *TRUE!*

NO!

NO!

NO!

HAVE YOU *NEVER* FELT LIKE A PAWN IN SOME UNSUSPECTED GAME BEYOND YOUR *COMPREHENSION?*

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO CLAIM *YOUR HERITAGE,* PATRICE.

YOU SICK *BASTARD!* I'M NOT TELLING YOU *ANY*THING!

I THINK I *WILL* LET THE BLOOD RED QUEEN HAVE YOU, AFTER ALL.

MERGE YOUR ROLES IN OUR LITTLE DRAMA, SO TO SPEAK.

IN HER DAY, THEY CALLED HER THE *SCARLET WHORE OF BABYLON*... BUT THAT'S *ANOTHER* STORY.

NOW SHE'S A *SPIRIT,* POURED FROM VESSEL TO VESSEL - AND THOSE VESSELS *RARELY* EMPTY WITHOUT *SHATTERING.*

SHE DOES HAVE HER USES. SHE'LL WEAR YOU LIKE A *CLOAK,* PATRICE. SHE'LL OWN EVERYTHING YOU ARE, *BODY* AND *MIND.*

WE'VE NO PARTICULAR USE FOR YOUR *SOUL,* I'M AFRAID...

"...BUT I'D WAGER THERE ARE OTHERS WHO FEEL *DIFFERENTLY*..."

DAUGHTER?

PATRICE ESPOSITO DOESN'T *HAVE* A DAUGHTER!

OH, RUBBISH. CERTAINLY SHE DOES.

THE CHILD WILL *USHER IN* THE VAMPIRE APOCALYPSE! IF YOU'D READ THE BLACK TESTAMENT, YOU'D KNOW THAT.

THE BOOK *DIXIE* TOOK FROM THE *BLACK POPE?** HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S IN IT?

* VAMPIRELLA #6

PLEASE STAY ON THE TOPIC. FOR THE FUTURES TO SHIFT GEARS, THE CHILD *MUST* BE TAKEN OUT OF THE PICTURE. AM I BEING TOO *EUPHEMISTIC?*

WE *DON'T* MURDER *CHILDREN!*

I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED* A WIDER PERSPECTIVE WOULD BE TOO MUCH TO EXPECT.

HE'S RIGHT. *YOU* SAW WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BE.

BUT-

IS *ONE* CHILD WORTH MORE THAN SIX *BILLION* PEOPLE, AND UNTOLD GENERATIONS?

THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR MERCY. I *WON'T* LET MY FRIENDS DOWN AGAIN. I *WILL* SAVE THEM, AND THE WORLD.

EVEN IF I DAMN MY OWN *SOUL* DOING IT.

INTERESTING. WHICH PIECE TO MOVE?

IT HARDLY MATTERS.

ALL PLOYS LEAD TO THE SAME OUTCOME.

HER BODY *FIGHTS* ME! HER EVERY NERVE *BURNS!* HOW DOES SHE *RESIST?!*

SHE'S HER FATHER'S DAUGHTER. YET HER AGONY MUST BE EQUAL TO YOURS, AND EASILY PUSHED TO THE *BREAKING* POINT.

BRING HER MOTHER HERE. IF FEAR ISN'T A WEAPON WE CAN USE AGAINST HER-

-LET'S SEE HOW DEEPLY *LOVE* CAN PIERCE!

*M*ANHATTAN, THE UPPER WEST SIDE:

IF IT *BOTHERS* YOU THAT MUCH, WALK *AWAY.* THIS IS A *WAR.* IT MAKES *SOME* HORRIBLE THINGS *NECESSARY.*

YES, I'VE *HEARD* THAT REASONING BEFORE. VERY *BUSHIDO.*

IF I STEP ASIDE AND LET YOU MURDER AN INNOCENT, HOW IS THAT DIFFERENT FROM STRIKING THE DEATHBLOW WITH *MY OWN* HAND?

THEN WHY AREN'T YOU TRYING TO STOP ME?

I WILL. IF THE TIME COMES. UNLIKE YOUR *LORD,* I DON'T *KNOW* THE FUTURE.

I WOULDN'T CONSIGN YOU TO HELL FOR AN ACT YOU HAVEN'T YET *COMMITTED.*

HE'S *NOT* MY LORD.

OH? *BISHOP* SEEMS TO THINK SO.

HELLO, MICHELE.

ANA! DID YOU FIND PATRICE?!!

WE...THINK WE KNOW WHO'S GOT HER. AND WHY.

TELL US ABOUT HER CHILD.

"I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS A MONSTER!"

HOW DID *YOU-* ?!

OH, SWEET JESUS! HE'S *BACK,* ISN'T HE?

YOU *KNOW* ABOUT HIM?

I SHOULD HAVE *WARNED* HER ABOUT HIM! I SHOULD HAVE *TOLD* HER!

I WAS SO *YOUNG* WHEN I MET HIM. HE WAS *BEAUTIFUL,* AND I WAS--I DIDN'T *KNOW!*

EXCUSE ME? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

PATRICE'S...

FATHER.

"I'M SORRY IF I MISLED YOU, BUT WE THINK SHE'S BEEN SNATCHED BY THE CHILD'S FATHER."

PATRICE'S FATHER *IS* HER DAUGHTER'S FATHER!

I SAW HIM *ONCE,* AFTER HE... *SEDUCED...* HER. HE HADN'T CHANGED IN 16 YEARS. WE CALLED THE *POLICE,* BUT HE WAS GONE. *VANISHED.* THE SAME WAY HE LEFT ME.

THIS IS ALL... WELL... REALLY TWISTED, *BUT...*

"...PATRICE *WILL* TELL HIM WHERE THE GIRL IS. SOONER OR LATER, SHE'LL *TELL* HIM."

"YOU'VE GOT TO HELP US GET TO HER *FIRST!*"

I *COULDN'T* TELL HER WHO HE WAS! THINGS WERE BAD *ENOUGH,* SHE WAS SO *FRAGILE.* I THINK IT WOULD HAVE *KILLED* HER TO LEARN.

MICHELE... *PLEASE...*

PATRICE NEVER *SAW* THE BABY. SHE DIDN'T *WANT* IT. I ARRANGED AN ADOPTION, IT WAS-- *EASIER* THAT WAY...

"*WHAT?* THEN *PATRICE* CAN'T *TELL* THE BLACK BISHOP ANYTHING! SHE DOESN'T *KNOW!*"

"WE'RE *SAFE,* AT LEAST FOR *NOW.*"

BUT WHAT ABOUT *PATRICE?!*

WE'LL BRING HER BACK. *WON'T* WE, VAMPIRELLA?

SURE. *SHH!* I SMELL BLOOD!

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE *NOW!*

EVER CONSIDER THE *SUBTLE* APPROACH?

TOO MUCH *HASSLE.* GET MICHELE TO THE SISTERHOOD. I'LL CATCH UP.

I'VE GOT A *PLAN.*

TAKE A *SHOT* IF YOU'RE DESPERATE BOYS - BUT DON'T FORGET WHO'S ALWAYS STANDING COME THE *MORNING.*

THERE'S ONLY *ONE* OF HER!

IT'S THE *APOSTATE*-THE KILLER. HE SHOULD HAVE *WARNED* US!

RIP HER TO SHREDS!

WE CAN'T LET THOSE *MONSTERS* HAVE MY *GRANDDAUGHTER!*

IF *WE* CAN'T FIND HER, I DOUBT *THEY* WILL.

WE CAN FIND HER! I *KNOW* WHERE SHE IS!

SHI! TAKE THE NEXT *LEFT!*

THIS IS *VAMPI!* THEY DON'T SUSPECT A *THING!* INTERCEPT AS *PLANNED!*

AND LEAVE DIXIE *OUT* OF IT.

IT'S A *BLIND ALLEY!*

THIS ISN'T A VERY GOOD PLAN.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE ALL THE *FAITH?*

HOW ABOUT WE *SEE* A LITTLE OF IT EVERY SO OFTEN?

I DON'T WASTE IT ON *KILLERS.*

ARE WE BACK ON *THAT* AGAIN?! SHI, I'M TRYING TO SAVE THE *WORLD!*

THE LITTLE GIRL AND PATRICE *ARE* MICHELE'S WORLD! DON'T YOU *GET* IT?

WHAT YOU WANT TO DO ISN'T *JUST!* AND YOU CAN'T TELL ME YOU KNOW AN ACT OF MURDER WILL MAKE A BETTER FUTURE!

MICHELE!

NO ONE WILL TOUCH THE WOMAN!

THE BITCHES OF CHRIST!

-*BLASPHEMY'S* NOT THE BEST WAY TO GO.

NOT THAT YOU WEREN'T DAMNED *ANYWAY.*

HERE'S A HOT TIP: WHEN YOU'RE STARING DOWN YOUR LAST WORDS-

FIAT LUX!

WHAT THE *HELL*-?

CONCENTRATED *ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT.* LIKE A PORTABLE 30 SECOND *TANNING BOOTH* - FOR US.

FOR VAMPIRES IT'S ASH WEDNESDAY.

WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED THESE.

THANKS.

VAMPI, IF YOU PROMISE YOU WON'T KILL THE GIRL, I HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL YOU.

I WON'T HURT ANYONE IF THERE'S A CHOICE. THAT'S THE BEST I CAN PROMISE.

THEN HERE'S AN ACT OF FAITH - MICHELE KNOWS WHO ADOPTED HER GRANDDAUGHTER. WE CAN FIND THE GIRL AND PROTECT HER.

IT DOESN'T NEED TO COME DOWN TO THE BLACK BISHOP OR DEATH.

LOOK! ONE OF THE UNDEAD SURVIVED!

ABOUT TIME HE MADE HIS MOVE. I THOUGHT HE'D HIDE IN THERE ALL NIGHT.

I WISH I'D KNOWN YOU WERE GOING TO BLURT THAT OUT. IF HE OVERHEARD YOU, IT'S TROUBLE.

SISTERS! GO WITH THE WOMAN AND COLLECT THE CHILD! KEEP HER SAFE AT HEADQUARTERS.

WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

I'M TIRED OF PLAYING DEFENSE ALL THE TIME. MY BET IS THAT VAMPIRE'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE BLACK BISHOP.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE THE WAR TO HIM!

MASTER! MASTER!

YOU'RE SO *PREDICTABLE*, GHAST. WEAK AND PREDICTABLE. AND STUPID.

I *KNEW* YOU'D LOSE.

IN FACT, I DEPENDED ON IT. THERE WAS NO OTHER REASON FOR TOLERATING YOU THIS LONG.

PLEASE!

NO!

CR UNCH!

IS *THAT*-?

SOMEONE GOT TO HIM BEFORE WE COULD.

I'M SUDDENLY HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS...

IF YOU'VE COME FOR PATRICE ESPOSITO, *TAKE* HER - IF YOU CAN.

BEFORE *I* TAKE *YOU.*

STOP!

SHI! NO!

SHI! WHERE ARE YOU?

THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG ABOUT THIS PLACE!

HELP ME...

THE VAMPIRESS IS RIGHT. WE DO NOT...CONFORM... TO YOUR NARROW RULES OF SPACE AND TIME.

THIS IS THE LABYRINTH WHERE MANY PHILOSOPHERS HAVE GONE ASTRAY. WHERE EVEN ONE SUCH AS YOU WILL BE LOST.

IT IS TIME TO DIE.

PATRICE?

HELP ME...

NO... GO AWAY...

DON'T LOOK AT ME!

SHH. WE'LL GET YOU OUT OF HERE. EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY.

WAK!!

WHAT?

HA HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

I'VE KNOWN MEN LIKE YOU. YOU WALLOW IN THE PAIN OF OTHERS TO BUTTRESS YOUR FEEBLE DELUSIONS OF SUPERIORITY.
I EXIST TO SAY YOU CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE.
I'M NOT A MAN. I AM SUPERIOR!
AIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIII
VAMPIRELLA!
WHY RUN FROM DEATH? THERE'S NOWHERE ELSE TO RUN TO.
YOU'RE ALREADY LOST IN MY LABYRINTH. YOUR ALLIES, YOUR WORLD, EVERTHING YOU LOVE!

"THERE'S NO WAY OUT."

PATRICE?

NO!

SHE'S *DEAD!* BUT I PROMISED-!

WHO *DID* THIS?!

THINK ABOUT IT.

SHE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH *SENSE,* YOUR FRIEND.

BUT SHE HAD A LOT OF *HEART.*

next: LAST BLOOD

VAMPIRELLA®

GUEST-STARRING

SHI™

QUEEN'S GAMBIT

GRANT MORRISON MILLAR CONNER PALMIOTTI

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